



## Mini circles (neighborhood traffic circles)

### Definition

Raised circular medians (traffic circles) constructed in the center of residential intersections. Vehicles must change their travel path to maneuver around the circle, which, though uncommon, may also be controlled by “stop” or “yield” signs on approaches.

### Objective

To reduce motor vehicle speeds, manage traffic, and improve safety at intersections in residential areas.

### Advantage

Can significantly reduce travel speeds and the likelihood and severity of pedestrian (and other) crashes. This benefit can be especially useful near schools or other areas where children are present.

Promote a more consistent rate of travel on streets that encourages pedestrian and bicycle usage.

Can have a positive aesthetic value and enhance the quality of the streetscape through landscaping and other enhancements.

Provide an opportunity for community activity in residential areas, with citizens installing and maintaining plantings or other enhancements.

Self-enforcing treatment, which calms two streets at once.

### Challenge

Can limit the turning ability of larger vehicles. (This can be mitigated by the use of aprons/mountable curbs. Traffic circles are not recommended at intersections with high volumes of large trucks and buses turning left.)

Care must be taken not to limit sightlines required for safe operation of vehicles and travel generally.

May require the removal of parking spaces near the intersection in order to allow trucks and other larger vehicles space to maneuver.

Installation requires assessment of the needs of blind pedestrians for whom traffic circles can be a barrier or cause confusion.

Mid-block speeds may not decline. (Can be combined with speed humps for mid-block control.)

### Resources

ITE Traffic Calming Measures — Neighborhood Traffic Circle <http://www.ite.org/traffic/circle.asp>.

PedSafe — Mini Circles [http://www.pedbikesafe.org/PEDSAFE/countermeasures\\_detail.cfm?CM\\_NUM=34](http://www.pedbikesafe.org/PEDSAFE/countermeasures_detail.cfm?CM_NUM=34).

FHWA Technical Summary: Mini Roundabouts <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersection/roundabouts/fhwas10007/>.

“Neighborhood Traffic Calming: Seattle’s Traffic Circle Program” <http://www.usroads.com/journals/rmej/9801/rm980102.htm>.



Images (clockwise from main image):

Example of a neighborhood traffic circle.  
Source: Dan Burden, pedbikeimages.org.

Additional examples:  
Sources: Dan Burden, pedbikeimages.org; Heather Bowden, pedbikeimages.org; Carl Sundstrom, pedbikeimages.org; .